

Third Avenue Transit Corridor Improvements Project 30% Design Outreach Summary

Overview

Outreach during 30% design focused on sharing information and obtaining feedback from transit riders, businesses, residents, and visitors about proposed design elements and improvements to Third Avenue.

Public Engagement Goals

The project's public involvement strategy during the 30% design phase was developed to accomplish the following goals:

- Make project information and opportunities to give input easy to access and culturally sensitive
- Use outreach means and methods that are appropriate for target audiences and desired input
- Define which project elements are candidates for public-private partnerships and begin to identify partners
- Create a project record of public input, responses, and outreach activities

Outreach and Public Engagement Activities

The following outreach activities were used during the 30% design phase:

Neighborhood Sessions

Three Neighborhood Sessions were held along Third Avenue between Denny Way and S Jackson Street between August 31 and September 3, 2015. These sessions served as outdoor open houses held in different parts of the Third Avenue corridor and provided an opportunity for SDOT and Metro to introduce design elements and improvements being considered and receive feedback on initial improvement priorities. Each session was located within a specific neighborhood segment as proposed by the design team: Belltown, Business District and Pioneer Square and occurred between 11 AM to 6 PM on weekdays in order to maximize feedback from multiple audiences who use the corridor throughout the week.

Date	Area	Time
Monday, August 31, 2015	Belletown	3 – 6 PM
Wednesday, September 2, 2015	Business District	3 – 6 PM
Thursday, September 3, 2015	Pioneer Square	11 – 2 PM

Neighborhood Sessions were well attended with a total of 142 participants stopping and sharing their feedback about the corridor. There was widespread support for improving Third Avenue and many people commented that overall safety throughout the corridor along with moving transit more rapidly and reliably along Third Avenue were their top areas of concern.

Project Briefings

SDOT and Metro offered project briefings to interest groups from each of the three neighborhoods along Third Avenue as well as key business and other advisory groups in order to share project information with stakeholders. Each briefing included a short presentation given by SDOT and Metro

project representatives and a question and answer period. Briefings were held with the following groups:

- Pioneer Square Preservation Board
- Seattle Design Commissions
- Downtown Seattle Association
- Commute Seattle
- Tashiro Kaplan building
- Alliance for Pioneer Square

Feedback received at briefings was supportive of proposed changes to Third Avenue with many groups asking SDOT and Metro to update them as the project moved through subsequent phases of design.

Stakeholder Workshop

The project team held a stakeholder workshop on November 12, 2015 with SDOT and Metro leadership to host a discussion with Third Avenue property owners located along proposed Phase 1 priority blocks and representative community organizations to ensure understanding of potential improvements to the corridor. At the workshop, stakeholders and the project team discussed:

- The project purpose, objectives, and criteria
- An update on design progress, including how public feedback has been incorporated to develop phasing and priorities
- The proposed prioritized list of Phase 1 improvements (using secured funding of \$8.1 million)
- Provided input on priorities for future phases to support development of a funding plan

A total of 16 stakeholders signed-in at the workshop, however approximately 40 stakeholders attended the workshop. Overall, stakeholders reacted positively to design progress and the prioritization of improvements. They expressed a desire for reassurances that the project would not stop after the \$8.1 million current budget is spent.

Project Survey

A web-based survey was used in fall 2015 to engage transit riders, businesses, residents, and pedestrians and collect feedback about proposed elements of the project design being proposed for prioritization, and asked the respondent to answer the question, “Do you feel each of the following proposed design elements will enhance the environment on Third Avenue?” The survey was posted on both SDOT and Metro project websites from August 31 through September 30, 2015 and made available at all three of the Neighborhood Sessions. A total of 132 responses were collected during the survey and submitted to the project for consideration.

Survey results found that the majority of people support key design elements proposed in Phase 1 priority improvements. There was confusion about whether adding new bus stops at Pike to Union and Marion to Columbia blocks along Third Avenue would improve transit capacity. Additional outreach to highlight how additional bus stops will improve transit time and reliability will be important as the project moves forward.

Project Websites

SDOT and Metro’s project websites were updated to ensure the public had access to the most current project information. Upcoming outreach activity dates, a project overview PowerPoint presentation, and

updated design details were made available to the public along with comment forms and a link to the project survey. Contact information for both the SDOT and Metro project managers was provided, which generated several inquiries and request for additional project information.

Project Email Inbox

During 30% design, the project team established a joint communications inbox and email address (info@3avetransit.org) for the public to use to ask questions about the project. The inbox was established in July 2015. Since it became operational, a total of 41 emails were received, reviewed, and responded to by the project team.

Outreach Findings

Outreach during 30% design was successful in reaching a broad audience through various means while sharing progress about project design. It also built additional relationships with key stakeholders who will play a larger role in supporting the success of the project. The public's feedback received during this phase of work was recorded during each outreach event and provided to SDOT and Metro for consideration. Key priorities supported by the public are moving forward into subsequent phases of design (Phase 1 priority improvements). Stakeholders additionally called for a clear funding plan and phasing approach to illustrate SDOT and Metro's commitment to fully implementing improvements along the full Third Avenue corridor. Retaining engagement with key stakeholders, community groups, and the general public as well as showing how continued feedback was considered and incorporated into the design where possible, will continue to be goals of this project as it advances.